Erie Canal in Western New York

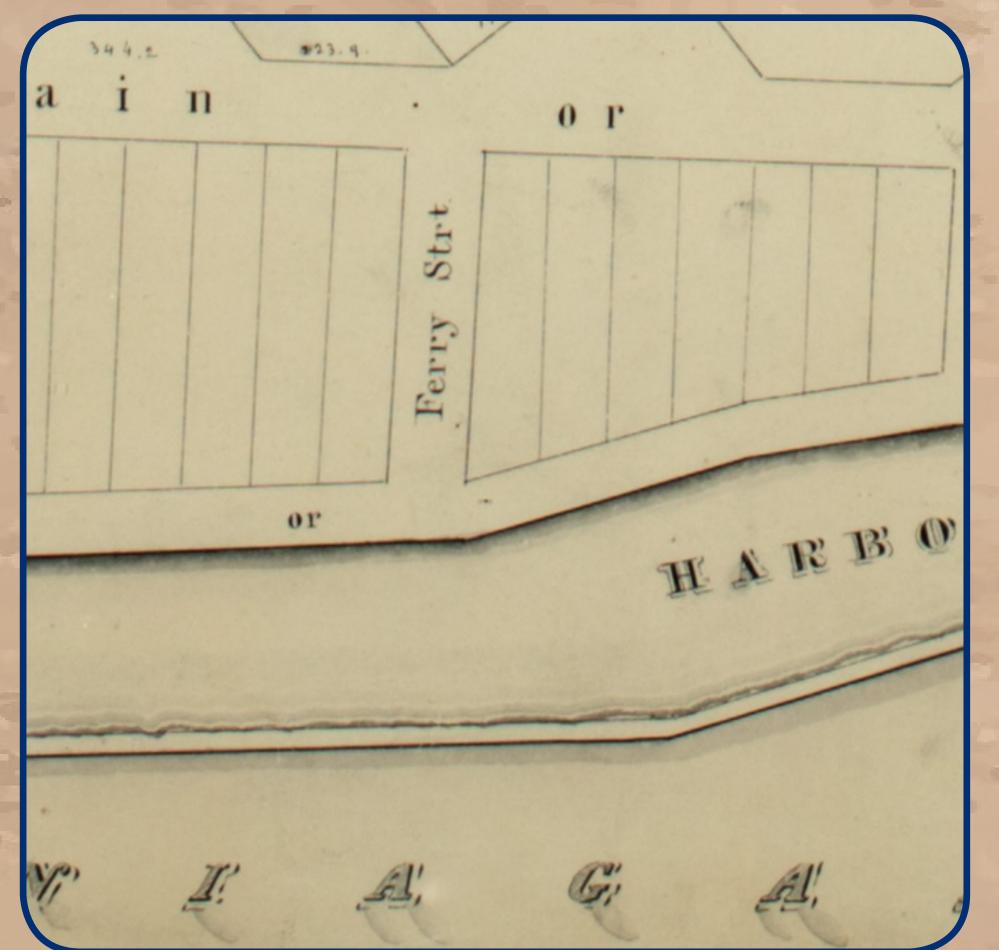
The effect of the canal on New York State cannot be understated. Connecting Atlantic shipping to the Great Lakes and beyond, the sharp increase in trade made New York City the most populous city in the United States, and the village of Buffalo the busiest inland port in the world. A glance at the state's interior shows the many towns founded due to the mass westward migration of citizens and immigrants:

Lockport, Brockport, Weedsport, Fairport, Gasport, Spencerport, Middleport, Port Gibson, Port Byron, and others. The Erie Canal also served as a conduit for social change, bringing reformers in the abolition and suffrage movements to communities in central and western New York. The canal's tow path served as a route to freedom for slaves on the Underground Railroad.

Village of Black Rock



The canal spurred construction of docks, warehouses, and foundries in this community and many others. As the terminus, however, Buffalo grew the fastest, from a population of just over 2,000 in 1820 to over 350,000 by the end of the century. Buffalo annexed Black Rock in 1853.



The Underground Railroad

Located at the foot of Ferry Street in the village of Black Rock, the Black Rock Ferry served as a terminal point on the underground railroad. Fugitive slaves crossed the Niagara River into Canada using the ferry, which has been described as one of the most vital links on the underground railroad. Today, Broderick Park is located on the site of the former Black Rock Ferry.

of a master.' As the ferry boat does not run across the Niagara river in the night, by day break they were at the ferry house, and rallied the ferryman to carry them to the Canada shore. They hastened to the boat, and just as they were about to let go, the master was seen, on his foaming horse, with pistol in hand, calling out to the ferryman to stop

An excerpt from the June 1836 edition of the Anti-Slavery Record detailing a harrowing escape of fugitive slaves across the river using the Black Rock Ferry as their former master pursued them.

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ANTI-SLAVERY RECORD.

THE RUNAWAY.

The Suffrage Movement

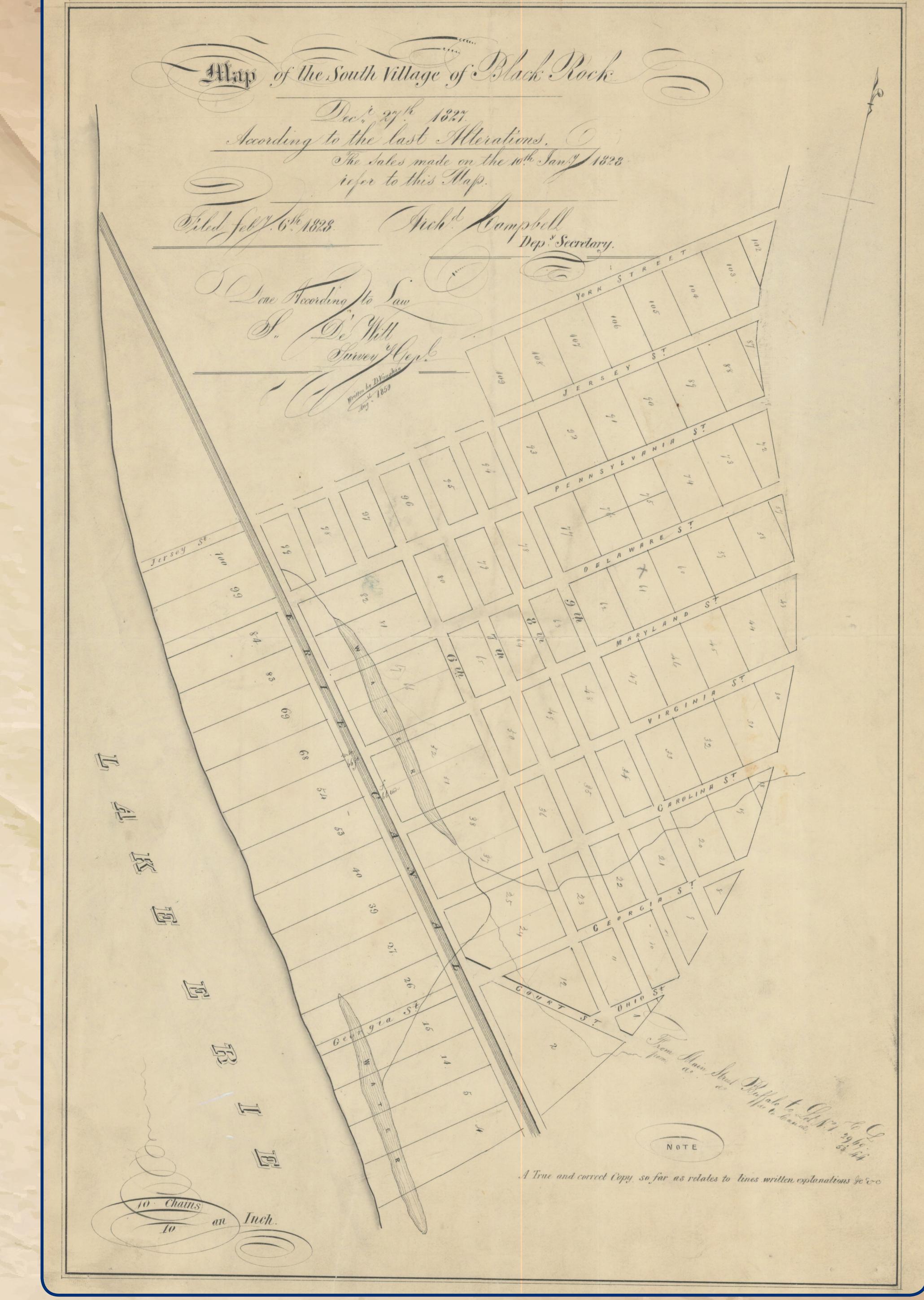


Harriot Stanton Blatch



Elizabeth Cady Stanton

In the early 1900s, women involved in the suffrage movement found the Erie Canal a convenient way to travel across New York and rally people to their cause. Using canal boats, they would stop at communities between Albany and Buffalo to hold demonstrations and speak to women and men about the suffrage movement. One of these canal boat campaigns took place in 1908 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls. Another was organized by Harriot Stanton Blatch, the daughter of early women's rights leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton.



The Village of Black Rock as it appeared in 1827, by noted Erie Canal Cartographer David Vaughn.



The village of Black Rock was originally slated to be the western terminus of the Erie Canal, but lost out to the nearby village of Buffalo instead. In this map the canal is seen passing through Black Rock, parallel to the Niagara River, which was too swift for canal barges.